

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed November 29, 2006 has been carefully considered.

Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-12, 27-51, and 53-55 are pending.

Claims 1-7, 9-12, 27-43, 45, and 48-51 have been allowed.

Claims 13-26 and 52 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

The Applicant gratefully acknowledges the indication of allowance of claims 1-7, 9-12, 27-43, 45, and 48-51. Applicants are further grateful for the indication of allowability of claims 18, 20, and 21, subject to their re-writing in independent form. New claims 53, 54, and 55 represent Claims 18, 20, and 21 rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of independent claim 13. Support for these changes may be found in the specification, pp. 4-25, and FIGS. 1-3.

Claims 8, 20, 44, and 46 have been amended to further particularly point out and distinctly claim subject matter regarded as the invention. Support for these changes may be found in the specification, pp. 4-25, and FIGS. 1-3. The text of claim 47 is unchanged, but its meaning is changed because it depends from amended claim 44.

The 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph Rejection

Claims 8, 20, 44, and 46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter applicant regards as the invention.¹ With this Amendment, Claim 20 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, rendering the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 moot as to Claim 20. With this Amendment, Claims 8, 44 and 46 have been amended to correct the antecedent

basis issues raised by the Examiner. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully submits Claims 8, 44, and 46 are in condition for allowance.

The 35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejection

Claims 13-17, 19, 22-26, and 52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Morales.^{2 3} With this Amendment, Claims 13-17, 19, 22-26, and 52 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, rendering the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 moot.

Conclusion

It is believed that this Amendment places the above-identified patent application into condition for allowance. Early favorable consideration of this Amendment is earnestly solicited.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner is thanked for the kind allowance of Claims 1-7, 9-12, 27-43, 45, and 48-51. The Examiner is also thanked for the finding of allowable subject matter in Claims 18, 20, and 21 if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Applicant acknowledges the Examiner's statement of reasons for allowance as set forth in the Office Action. However, the Applicant points out that the reasons for allowability of the above referenced claims are not limited to the reasons for allowance as set forth in the Office Action, and that additional reasons for allowability may exist, each of which may be independently sufficient to establish the patentability of one or more pending claims.

¹ Office Action mailed November 29, 2006, ¶ 2.

² U.S. Patent No. 5,291,554 to Morales.

³ Office Action at ¶ 7.

The Applicant respectfully reserves the right to introduce, articulate, or otherwise comment on any such additional reasons for allowance as may be appropriate in any future proceedings concerning the claimed invention.

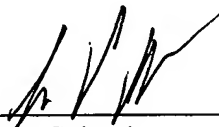
If, in the opinion of the Examiner, an interview would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number indicated below.

The Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. Please charge any additional required fee or credit any overpayment not otherwise paid or credited to our deposit account No. 50-1698.

Respectfully submitted,

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